

NEWS RELEASE

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Project Safe Neighborhoods: Grand Jury Charges Jacksonville Man with Possessing Crack Cocaine and Possession of a Gun after a Felony Conviction

Springfield, IL- Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, announced that a federal grand jury today charged Lawrence Jackson under the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative with possessing a firearm after being convicted of a felony and possession of 50 or more grams of crack cocaine with intent to distribute.

The charges against Jackson, age 40, of 504 E. Lafayette, Jacksonville, are the result of a cooperative investigation by the Illinois State Police; Central Illinois Enforcement Group; the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the Jacksonville Police Department; and, the Illinois Department of Corrections. Assistant U.S. Attorney Gregory M. Gilmore is prosecuting the case.

The indictment charging Jackson alleges that he possessed a .9 millimeter semi-automatic pistol on or about October 26, 2005, in Morgan County. According to the indictment, Jackson has a previous felony conviction in 2001 for possession of cocaine. The indictment further alleges Jackson possessed 50 or more grams of crack cocaine on or about October 26, 2005.

If convicted for the offense of possession of a firearm by a felon, the maximum statutory penalty is 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. If convicted of the drug possession offense, with no prior felony drug convictions, the penalty is a mandatory minimum 10 years to life in prison; with one prior felony drug conviction, the penalty is 20 years to life in prison; and with two prior felony drug convictions, the penalty is life imprisonment.

Jackson was arrested on May 24, 2006, and charged by criminal complaint with possession of 50 or more grams of crack cocaine with intent to distribute. During a detention hearing before U.S. Magistrate Judge Byron Cudmore on May 25, 2006, Jackson was ordered detained pending indictment.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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